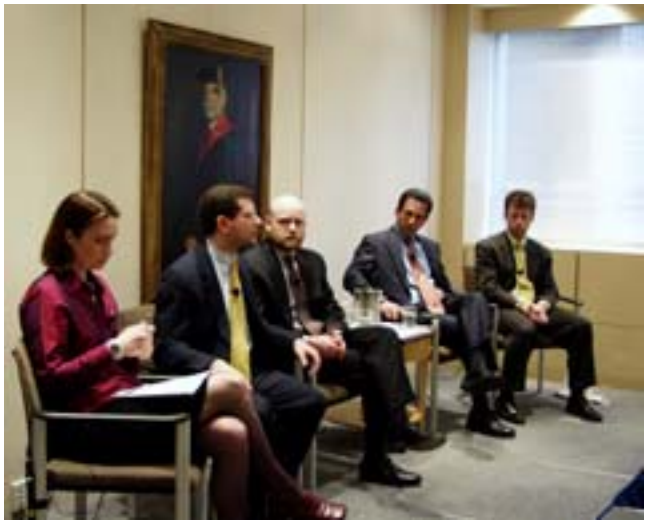
A Brookings Iraq Series Briefing

ON TO BAGHDAD:
WHAT WILL COALITION FORCES FACE NEXT?



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MR. JAMES M. LINDSAY: I want to welcome you all to another in a series of Brookings briefings on the war in Iraq. Thank you for coming this morning. I apologize that we are in a different room than normally, and I hope the people in the back will feel free later on to join in the question and answer session that follows our opening remarks.

I am joined here today by my distinguished colleagues in the Foreign Policy Studies program at the Brookings Institution. Let me go from my left to my right.

On my far left is Michael O'Hanlon, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies, an expert on defense policy as I'm sure most of you know.

To his right is Philip Gordon who is the Director of the Center on the United States and Freedom, formerly the Center on the United States and France. [Laughter]

To my right is Ken Pollack who is the Director of Research at the Saban Center here at Brookings and the author of "The Threatening Storm".

To Ken's right is Fiona Hill, our resident expert on all things Russian and all things British.

I think we're going to begin today by starting off with a discussion of the status of combat operations. I think we're going to begin with Mike O'Hanlon.

MR. MICHAEL E. O'HANLON: Thanks, Jim. We've already had the highlight of the briefing though, I'm afraid. That was a very witty line.

I just want to make a couple of comments. I just have one theme this morning and we'll have a lot more time for discussion. My one theme is that there's always the most recent analysis, the most recent fad in how people are thinking about this. Today I want to say things are actually going reasonably well despite the fact that the last 24-48 hours have been characterized by some setbacks and a lot of negative coverage in the last couple of days in the newspapers and television about how Mr. Rumsfeld perhaps was too cavalier, too caught up in new theories of warfare, too arrogant in his game plan and how we're really suffering some major setbacks.

I do not agree with that assessment. I think one can critique specific parts of the battle plan and certainly not having the 4th Mechanized Infantry Division in the fight right now due to the problem with Turkey is a major setback. I personally would have waited another month to start the war on both military and diplomatic grounds, try to provide one final ultimatum along

the lines of what Canada was proposing, and give the 4th Mechanized Infantry time to get in position. But I don't think it's a major problem that they're not yet there. They are coming, they will be there, and if we need their help we will be in a position to have it within a fairly short time.

In that sense the sandstorm may actually be just as well to go through right now because we're going to have to wait a few days perhaps to have the real combat punch we may need in the end.

But let's not forget a year ago the debate in this town was whether 75,000 American forces would be enough to win this war or something on the order of 200,000 to 300,000 would be required. Well the latter obviously won. We are over a quarter a million American forces in the region already, headed at least for 300,000 if not closer to 400,000 by the time all is said and done. So in broad terms we did a little bit of a rolling start but it was a very very delayed rolling start which allowed a quarter of a million American forces to be in place before the war began which, by the way, give us a higher ratio, a better force ratio relative to the Iraqi military than we had in Desert Storm.

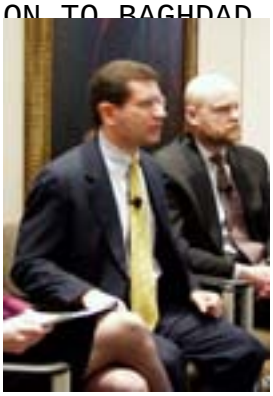
In Desert Storm we had about 550,000 American forces in the region, the Iraqis had a million man army. Today it's 250,000 versus 400,000. Granted, we have a smaller coalition as Ivo Daalder convincingly argued in his WebEd yesterday on our web page, but nonetheless I think we're in pretty good shape.

As retired Marine General Dan Riper pointed out in today's paper, the four divisions that the coalition has in place are very powerful divisions, they're reinforced with additional support capability, they have the kind of versatility you want in a coming urban fight, and I don't think there's any major problem here with the kind of force we have in place.

So there's a lot to say, there are a lot of specific critiques, specific caveats. I could add to that broad assessment. We've never been a proponent of a cakewalk or a belief that there will be a cakewalk here. Phil Gordon and I have been arguing for over a year we needed a big force, needed to be ready for some real fighting. There still could be some real tough fighting ahead. Loss rates could still increase relative to what we've seen in the last couple of days, but nonetheless, I think the basic battle plan is on track and that's the broad message I want to leave you with today.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Michael.

We're now going to turn it over to Ken Pollack who will help us make sense of Iraq's military strategy.



MR. KENNETH M. POLLACK: I didn't know that was what I was being asked to do.

Let me start by saying that I think the events of the last 48 hours have given a tremendous boost to Saddam Hussein. Now obviously we're all reading tea leaves. None of us really knows what Saddam thinks and none of us really knows what his battle plan is. But as best we can tell from his speeches, from deployments that Iraq has made, from the various moves, and also from the intelligence sources, it does seem that everything that has happened so far is basically going according to Saddam's plan.

He never expected to defend the periphery of Iraq. It was only ever manned with regular army units that he expected to collapse. And these stay-behind units which you're seeing right now, Fedayeen Saddam, FSO personnel, perhaps some members of the Muhabarat, the Ba'th party militia, the popular army, a few other security services who are doing two things simultaneously. One, they're keeping control over the population and preventing the population from throwing off the shackles of Saddam's regime, keeping them in place. And also as you're seeing, harassing and tying down coalition troops which I think is about all he ever expected to have happen in the periphery. He always expected that the battle would be fought and for him won in Baghdad. What's more, he always expected to win a political victory, that it would be either international pressure on the United States or the threat of terrible casualties in Baghdad that would cause the United States to basically pull its punch, to stop before we got to the gates of Baghdad and be unwilling to actually go into the city and take him out.

I think that as far as Saddam Hussein is concerned, the war is pretty much unfolding as he expected.

Now that opening day salvo by the U.S. Air Force, that may have taken him by surprise. If he was in the bunker, and the evidence does seem to suggest that he was in the bunker, he probably was shaken up by that initial attack. In particular, he's got to be asking himself who betrayed me or what betrayed me? Was it a person? Was it a technical system? I think that's why you've seen such a tremendous decrease in Iraqi communications during the first days of the war. This is Saddam's MO. When there is something that gets close to him his immediate move is go to ground, stop communicating, rely only on the most trusted emissaries and land lines to the extent that you feel you can do anything remotely, but mostly trusted emissaries, trusted couriers, to deliver messages.

During the Gulf War he found that it was perfectly adequate to run his war that way, and I think he's finding the same basically the case here. The stay-behind forces are doing what they're supposed to do; the forces around Baghdad are doing what they're supposed to do.

But in particular I think what has given him the most hope over the last few days has been the reaction of the American media to the setbacks on Sunday. When you have American reporters reporting "heavy casualties", that's a quote. Constantly we heard this on Sunday from the American, particularly the TV media. Heavy casualties in the fighting around Nasiriyah and the fighting around Basra. It turns out that we took 10 or 12 kills, and that was being reported as heavy casualties.

That's what Saddam wants to hear because Saddam believes that we do consider 10 or 12 casualties heavy casualties and we won't be willing to take large numbers of casualties. For him, 10 or 12 casualties that -- One Iraqi brigade takes that in training exercises in a week. Ten or 12 casualties is nothing. For Saddam, 10,000 casualties in a day might be heavy casualties.

Remember what he said to Ambassador Joe Wilson in Baghdad right before the first Gulf War which was yours is a society that cannot take 10,000 casualties. So with Saddam hearing that we are considering ten casualties a lot and seeing the furor in the media is exactly what he wants to hear. I think it is reinforcing his sense that he is going to be able to prevail because we're just not going to be willing to take the kind of casualties he thinks he can inflict on us in the battle for Baghdad when it finally begins. That doesn't suggest that I agree with him, it just suggests that this is what he thinks.

As a kind of final note there, those of you who have been to these press briefings before and have heard me speak at these press briefings before will know I think that this actually in some ways paradoxically plays to our advantage because we know that Saddam does not necessarily want to use weapons of mass destruction and he doesn't necessarily want to get into fighting in the streets of Baghdad. He has been I think holding off on using that because he would really prefer not to do so. The more confident he is, the more likely he will refrain from exercising those options.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Ken, for taking us inside Saddam's head.

We're now going to turn to Phil Gordon who is going to fill us in on the northern front and relations with Turkey.

MR. PHILIP H. GORDON: Let me widen it a bit and talk about what's going on in the north. It seems to me war is obviously always unpredictable and the dangers and risks tend to surprise you, but right now I think it seems likely that of the two greatest things to worry about one is obviously the assault on Baghdad which we are focused on, but the other is probably the situation in the north and the risk that Turkey might get involved and lead to clashes among Turks, Kurds, Arabs, and instability in the northern part of Iraq. So I'd like to say something about

what the situation is now and then put it in a broader context of U.S.-Turkey relations.

The absence of Turkey as part of the coalition or at least as a place from which we can base our forces has been one of the major diplomatic setbacks going into this. Mike already mentioned the issue of not having the 4th Infantry Division participating in this. As you know, its soldiers have been sitting in Texas for the past couple of months. Its equipment has been bobbing in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea for the past couple of months. Really this was a tremendous failure on the part of the United States and Turkey and could lead to important recriminations later. We've seen already speculation in the press that the absence of having this division now is leading to higher casualties. That could grow, obviously, to the extent that the military situation goes badly on the ground and that will lead to real implications for our view of Turkey and Turkey's of us.

Why did this happen? Blame will go in both directions. It's easy to blame the Bush Administration for not getting this done and underestimating the degree or Turkish resistance and so on. But I think a significant amount of that responsibility goes to the Turkish side as well which consistently underestimated our timeline and our willingness to wait and our other options.

I was in Ankara in early February when we were really pressing this case. I think the U.S. first asked to deploy our troops from southern Turkey in December-January. By early February we were calling, Vice President Cheney happened to call the Prime Minister when I was there, and the answer from him was we need another week. How about we have this final vote on the 18th of February? That at the time to the United States was way too late. It happened to be a month before the war started. But the Turkish side seemed always to think that there was more time and we could wait and we could wait and we'll make that decision later.

Ultimately they underestimated the United States. By the time Turkey had a new Prime Minister in place and was ready to do this deal and that Prime Minister came back to the United States and said okay, maybe we can talk about this again, the answer from the United States, Colin Powell was, it's too late. We moved on. We'd like some airspace but you missed your chance for this package deal.

The reason I mention all of that, it's behind us now but it's important in the way this is going to be seen between the two countries and the recriminations that are possible if we start taking more casualties because of a perceived absence of heavy forces in the Iraq campaign that would be blamed on Turkey. And the recrimination goes in the opposite direction as well. We're starting a war in Iraq that could lead to a spillover of Kurdish refugees and all of the things that Turkey is afraid of.

That's why I say there are two risks involved in all of this. One is obviously on the

ground in the north. If you do get Turkey going in against our wishes, clashes with the Kurds, which the Kurds said quite specifically they're willing to engage in if the Turks do come in. The United States now warning Turkey, if you saw President Bush two days ago he used language that is not often heard in the U.S.-Turkey relationship. "I expect Turkey not to go into Northern Iraq." The President expects this from the Turks, who feel that they have a far greater interest than we do in Northern Iraq -- 30,000 deaths from terrorism, PKK and all of the rest.

So this has very important implications for what might happen in the north in the coming days and weeks but it also has wider implications for the U.S.-Turkey relationship and that's what I will end on.

For years now Turkey and the United States have been absolute strategic partners. We both needed each other absolutely. We needed Turkey as a pillar, a bridge to the Middle East on issues like Iraq, Iran, Caspian energy, Russia, European security, NATO. Turkey was an important fundamental partner, the democracy in the Muslim world and so on, giving the impression that we would do anything to back them and we would. We backed their membership in the European Union, we supported them on the Cyprus issue, on European security, all across the board, the U.S. is Turkey's close strategic partner. And it went the other way as well. They needed us supporting IMF, economic packages and so on.

That led us all to believe that when push comes to shove nothing could pull these two countries apart. Now we've seen something that has pulled them apart. And it has really shattered this notion that we are Turkey's best friend and we'll always stand with them, and they are our best friend and will always be there for us. That has had implications for the Turkish economy, not getting this aid package from the United States. The Turkish lira has fallen against the dollar. The Turkish stock market has fallen by more than ten percent. And now we have the President telling them what we expect from them and them telling us what they are going to do in their national interest.

I'll just end with the notion that this, therefore, could have implications much wider than what happens in Northern Iraq in the coming weeks, and it would be a pyrrhic victory indeed if we do finally manage to change the regime in Iraq, but the result of that is instability in Northern Iraq and destabilization in Turkey.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much Phil, for reminding us the complications U.S. strategy may encounter aren't only going to happen in Baghdad.

Let me turn to my colleague Fiona Hill who is going to talk about some of our other friends and allies.

MS. FIONA HILL: Unfortunately I'm just going to add to, I think, this picture of complications down the line because, sadly, I fear that there could also be a rift at some point with the United Kingdom in the offing.

I've just come back from a trip to London, returned on Sunday, and the popular discontent that we saw earlier in March and in February is still there, even if protest numbers are considerably smaller on the streets of London. The real iconic symbol of the opposition to the war came with the resignation of Robin Cook. If you remember, that was March 17th, so just a few days before the beginning of the war. Robin Cook's an extremely important figure in British politics. He's very close to Tony Blair. He was, of course, a former Foreign Secretary of Britain and he was the leader of the House. So this was not an inconsequential resignation.

Cook's speech has really summed up the feelings of many in the opposition. It's been repeated by prominent political commentators and his main messages were that the U.K. is not a super power like the United States, it can't afford to wage war on its own, that the British interests are best served in a multilateral context. So the fact that there was not a second resolution and that there's not United Nations cover for this war is a great failure on the part of the British government.

The United Kingdom, or the popular perception in the United Kingdom, is that there was not a compelling urgent reason for war at this very juncture and that there was no demonstrable threat to U.K. security at this point. That the threshold of war should be very high and that he [Cook] did not believe that that threshold had been crossed, especially as both the U.S. and the British militaries were playing up Iraq's military weakness at this juncture. He also concluded that the U.S. government was more interested in regime change than in real issues of disarmament. So those are the main messages from his speech.

This being said, at the same time in his resignation speech, Robin Cook also emphasized his admiration for Blair. I did notice, in contrast with a visit to Britain several months ago, the fact that admiration for Blair is in fact increasing, ironically, because he has, so to speak, "stuck to his guns."

There is also of course large support for British troops, which is the reason behind the tapering off of protests and sheer numbers on the streets in London.

But there's also, at the same time, a real feeling that the U.S. government does not appreciate the sacrifices that Britain is making and the political cost that Britain is likely to incur as a result of waging this war. This was really demonstrated in the television coverage of the war

in Iraq which is just as extensive as here, 24 hours of war in Iraq, war all the time.

What was really striking was the way that Tony Blair and other high-level members of the Cabinet and the British political parties, the opposition, spoke to the country—at the same time that, of course, Bush, Rumsfeld and others were making addresses to the United States people.

If you actually look at Tony Blair's presentation to the nation on announcing the war he spoke in a completely empty room devoid of any symbols of British nationalism. He had a small table with a lamp and a phone and an open door behind him, which was a very sharp contrast to Bush who was sitting with several flags and pictures of his family and making fairly robust statements about the need to protect U.S. interests.

Tony Blair at all times has stressed the threat to international stability, the need for a humanitarian intervention in Iraq, the importance of really reducing the number of casualties, a message that is also being stated in the United States, but there's been a really jarring juxtaposition of Blair's statements about the fact that this is a necessary evil on the road to peace with discussions of "shock and awe" and preemptive action in the United States. Many British politicians admitted that this grandstanding that they saw on the part of the U.S. government was really putting their teeth on edge and making it more difficult for Blair to present the case for war continuously to the British people.

The biggest issue of all, even in the context of the war in Iraq already underway, is Israel and Palestine. It was mentioned explicitly in Robin Cook's speech. He said we're pushing Iraq here on the issue of defiance of UN resolutions, but we're not pushing Israel and there's a real sense of injustice in the Muslim world as a result. That was a prominent part of his speech.

There's also a sense in Britain that Blair's support for Bush at this particular juncture is part of a quid pro quo, of having some kind of step forward, some demonstrable step forward on Israel and Palestine. This was mentioned throughout many of the presentations and, in fact, it was stressed by members of Blair's cabinet in public speeches that the Prime Minister has insisted that this become part of the issue of the immediate aftermath of a war in Iraq. At the same time analysts and politicians have been very skeptical. They feel that Blair has misread the intentions of the U.S. government and also the popular mood in the United States. And, in fact, many issues were left unchallenged in many of the public speeches including the implication that Israel is pulling U.S. policy. This was put out there as a fact, and one that was never taken on by any of the British politicians when they were actually asked about it in public speeches.

This is obviously a very great difference between British thinking and the United States. The strong feeling is that if the United States does not begin to really stress the humanitarian aspects of the war, does not in fact make any step on Israel and Palestine, that there will be a real

rift with Great Britain. And especially if the United States moves forward in the aftermath of the war in Iraq and seems to "own Iraq," which has been coming out in some of the statements here. If the U.S. is seen to act in a very demonstrably imperial sense, then the British could very well part company and that will be disastrous for Tony Blair's position.

Now quickly on Russia, we have a major issue with arms sales that we can talk about more in the Q&A. There are a couple of points I want to make here. Unfortunately, this has been a conflict that has been coming down the pike between the U.S. and Russia for some time. The issue of Russian arms sales, not just to Iraq, has obviously been one we've been talking about for several years now, including arms sales to Iran and to China. We have to remember that Russia is a niche supplier in the world's arms sales market. They've only got about five percent of the share, and of course who do they have? They have all of the people that we are most concerned about because those are the people who are not buying U.S. arms or we won't sell them to. So of course for the Russians this is a big deal and the U.S. is encroaching increasingly on Russian markets. Unfortunately, many of the companies are indeed private. They often do operate outside of the scrutiny of the Russian arms export agency, but this is big bucks for the Russians.

They have recently tried to increase their arms sales to about $6 billion annually. This was a projection that they made two years ago in 2001. It represents about $3 billion in revenues to the Russian state budget and if you think Russian state expenditures are about $30 billion a year, you can see that that's a pretty considerable amount of money coming into the Russian budget.

So this is going to be a big issue. We've known for some time they've been selling this equipment, but the Russians, just like the Turks, have underestimated the U.S. timeline. They thought something could be headed off here. So now we have a collision of issues we've been concerned about for some time with the war. I think this is going to be a very serious rift in U.S.-Russian relations, but it also underscores the fact that we never really did have a strategic deal with Mr. Putin. He's never seen the personal relationship with George Bush as overarching everything. This is no longer the era of Boris and Bill and he has opposed the war most consistently right from the very beginning of his presidency. So now we're beginning to see really what the attitude of the Russian government is towards this.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you very much, Fiona.

We're going to go to question and answer right now.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MR. LINDSAY: One other public announcement. That is I want to remind everybody

the transcript of this and other Brookings press briefings are available on the web and also that we are posting something Mike referred to earlier, daily WebEds on the Brookings home page every day. I particularly wanted to cite that because mine gets posted later today. [Laughter]

QUESTION: Jim [Fornbush] with ABC 7 News for Michael O'Hanlon and Mr. Pollack.

How do you envision the final battle for Baghdad unfolding? Our troops are 50 miles from Baghdad. There are three Iraqi divisions there we know of, 80,000 troops. What's going to happen from here on in?

MR. O'HANLON: Very good question. I divide the answer into two parts. One, the fight against these Republican Guard units outside of Baghdad and secondly the actual fight inside Baghdad against the Special Republican Guard and whatever pieces of the Republican Guard are there.

A couple of things to say. First, in broad terms it's obviously tough going here to fight the Republican Guard. They're better units and they're also in a better position geographically and physically than they were in Desert Storm. It's harder to get at them. We saw that with the Apache attacks yesterday. There was a lot of discussion about how many Apaches got hit with ground fire. The more important statistic was how few Iraqi armored vehicles we appear to have struck and destroyed, and I only saw that number once in all of my reading and it was estimated at 10 to 15 Iraqi vehicles destroyed. That's a troublesome development which does tell us we're going to have some tough slogging ahead.

If you think of the history of precision strike air power against armor, most of it really is from Desert Storm. In Desert Storm the first notable development is we showed we can hit moving armor very very easily. For example, the battle of Al Kafji in late January 1991 when the Iraqis tried to come at us and we easily defeated that. Then later in the war, of course, we learned how to do this tank planking where Iraqi armor that was in fixed position on the desert floor got heated up by the sun and then in the evening it didn't cool off as fast as the surrounding sand so we could see the armor in infrared scopes and use laser-guided bombs to destroy it.

But now we're facing a more complicated situation which is dug in Iraqi armor in built-up terrain.

When the Iraqis dug in tanks in Desert Storm they made some big mistakes. Of course they were out in the open. Also they would leave the piles of dirt they had dug right in front of the position they were occupying, giving away their location. I'm sorry for this long answer, but it's an important issue to think through tactically I think. So we could tell where the tanks were without even seeing them.

In this case I think the Iraqis have read the American defense literature over the last 12 years and figured out they better not do that again, if they didn't figure it out themselves at the time. So now they're in a much better position.

However, I'm still relatively optimistic. Maybe I'll leave the Baghdad part to Ken and just finish up here on the part that's outside of Baghdad. I'm glad Saddam has so many forces outside of Baghdad. I actually think he's making a mistake. Maybe he has no choice given the suspected loyalties of the Republican Guard, or suspected potential for disloyalty, but I think even though they're in built-up terrain, even though there are some civilian populations nearby, it's good news for us because as bad as this battle may get it's not going to get that bad in terms of civilian casualties. I think we're really going to see the importance of combined arms warfare in a way that we have not yet against the Iraqis.

In the ground war in Desert Storm the ground forces largely fought on their own. They did not have a lot of close air support. They didn't need it because the Iraqis made the mistakes I alluded to earlier. In this battle we're going to need to have ground forces move in on Iraqi positions, force the Iraqi tanks to fire back, give away their locations, and then we'll test this real-time information grid that we've been building up and see if it's really as good as advertised. At that point we'll have information on the location of Iraqi artillery and tanks and be able to use our full panoply of fighter jets, attack helicopters, and ground systems to attack in reply. It's that combined arms effect that I believe will be quite effective against those three or four divisions.

As I say, I'll leave the Baghdad, the harder part to Ken. But the good news about this and the reason why I'm at least somewhat optimistic is because if I'm right that we will win this fight, we may have to wait for the 4th Mechanized Infantry to do it right. We may have to wait ten days. But we will I think win this fight decisively outside of Baghdad. That only leaves one or two divisions worth of Iraqi capability to defend the capital, and even if that gets to be uglier than fighting, as it could be, and even if we lose many hundreds of Americans as we still could, I don't think there's any real doubt about a potential quagmire because I think Iraq's forces inside of Baghdad willing to fight to the death will number in the range of 10,000, 20,000, 30,000 and not more than that. It's already a pretty potent force but I think we can decisively defeat it.

MR. LINDSAY: Ken, what about Baghdad?

MR. POLLACK: Thanks for leaving the hard part, by the way.

I absolutely agree with Mike's description of the battle for the perimeter.

What I can say about the fight for Baghdad is, one of the things we've got going for us, I don't think anyone wants that battle. I don't think Saddam wants it either, to tell you the truth. I think that it is why we are seeing the Republican Guard performance that we have seen. He has

deployed the Guard outside the city as a perimeter defense. It is not an integrated urban defense which was our greatest concern. As Mike's pointed out -- I actually would go higher on the numbers. I think there are probably more like 40,000 to 60,000 security, Special Republican Guard, other things inside Baghdad now. Not a terribly meaningful number because these are not trained soldiers. And these are the kind of guys who they can kill people. If we come into that city and they want to, they can kill people, but their ability to mount the cohesive defense of the city is going to be very very limited. The battle for the city itself is going to be very nasty if we have to do it.

As I said, I don't think Saddam Hussein wants that battle. A, I think he knows that his troops in the city are not the best fighters that he's got. Also I think Saddam recognizes that if we really are willing to close with him and come into Baghdad it has undermined one of his most important, in fact probably his critical assumption for the entire war which is just that we are so casualty averse that we won't even try it.

Now he'll still have a fall-back position which is all right, they'll try this, they'll get bloodied, they'll pull back out of the city and try to do it that way. But I think he recognizes that if the United States is willing to go into the city and start the fight, that his likelihood of actually surviving and winning the war will have dropped very dramatically. For us, obviously it's going to be a very nasty fight and the biggest concern for us is exactly what we're seeing in Basra, our concern about civilian casualties. It is one of the terrible ironies of this war, that we care far more about Iraq's civilian population than the Iraqis do. And when we go into Baghdad it is just going to be even worse than it is in going along, because you're going to have five million hostages there.

To get back to this question of how we're going to do it, effectively what Mike suggested about what we're hoping will happen in Baghdad which is if we can crack the Republican Guard defenses around the perimeter of the city, the hope is that this will so demoralize those inside the city that they really won't be willing to put up much of a fight. And while we'll undoubtedly have some forces who are willing to fight to the death, the hope is that if we can really demonstrate that the Republican Guard just can't possibly hold the perimeter, that those inside the city will also realize that their fate is sealed and that many of them will be willing to either surrender or flee, go to ground, won't be willing to fight to the death. But this of course is the great risk and as Mike suggested, even there I don't think the United States will take catastrophic casualties, but I do expect it to be by far the heaviest casualties we're likely to see in the campaign.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Ken.

QUESTION: I'm Susan Page with USA Today.

When the war began just a week ago I think some reporters and some in the American

public have been surprised that it hasn't gone faster, an expectation of a very short war. I wonder what you think the consequences are if the war goes on longer than many had expected. The consequences militarily and diplomatically in terms of American public opinion.

MR. POLLACK: While I think that it's true that a lot of reporters did, I'm not convinced that anyone else did.

Militarily, the armed forces never had that expectation. The most likely estimate that I put in my book was four to eight weeks. I'm still, my concern about being wrong to the extent it exists is still that it will be less than the four weeks and that it will be greater than the eight weeks.

As far as the American public, again, we have seen some polls. The polls do seem to indicate that the public understands that this is not going to be a four or five day war. That it could go on for a period of time longer.

For me the bigger question out there is does the public at some point in time come to the conclusion that we are taking heavy casualties? By that I mean real heavy casualties, not heavy casualties as reported by some of these embedded reporters. But are we taking heavy casualties and not making progress toward the goal. I think under those circumstances that's when you will see public opinion starting to turn. Even there my guess is that the initial response from public opinion is going to be to say why aren't we making greater progress toward the goal? What is wrong with this strategy? Why is it that we're not making greater progress? Is it because of, as Mike and I have both said in the past, we would have preferred to have had more ground forces available before we started. Is it because of something else going out there? But I think the first move by public opinion is likely to be to turn on the strategy itself before they actually turn on the war itself. I think that will happen if it continues to drag on.

But as I said, my sense of where public opinion right now is, they understand that this war is not going to be over in a week and that it wasn't going to be won at the kind of level of casualties that we suffered in Afghanistan say, but we don't know at what point in time public opinion does start to turn. My own read is it's as much about what we're accomplishing or not accomplishing as it is the pure level of casualties and the amount of time itself.

MR. GORDON: I just wanted to add one thought on this extraordinary notion that on the sixth day of a war it is starting to drag on and as Ken suggested, casualties are starting to mount. It says something about the expectations that were set going into this war that we can even be talking in those terms. We have set off to change the regime of a major Arab country in the heart of the Arab world and our expectations are so high that after a week we're talking about setbacks and dragging on.

That is one of the few things working against the Administration. One of the spectacular and consistent successes of this Administration has always been to set expectations very low, for this President in particular, set expectations very low and exceed them. He has done it across a range of things all along. And the interesting thing about what's going on here is for the first time I think you have President Bush going into the situation where the expectations are so high that they're almost unmeetable. The Administration itself obviously contributed to that by trying to sell this war, emphasizing only the beautiful liberation of the Iraqi people, democracy, stability. And you had a selling job to do so you pitched it very high. But the problem is that's what many people are now expecting to the point where after a week we're worried about it dragging on. And it's not going to be at that level.

As I recall, and correct me if I'm wrong, the first time the President himself talked about the worries of a long and difficult campaign was when he announced that the war had started. It was in that speech that he said this could be long and very difficult, but he had never said it before.

So the bar is very very high for this operation.

MS. HILL: There's one other thing that we have to bear in mind too, that we shouldn't just think about U.S. casualties and military casualties, because world public opinion, the opinion outside the United States is also going to be looking at the civilian casualties. And that fits in very well with what Ken said in his opening presentation which is Saddam Hussein's own estimation of whether world public opinion and pressure from other governments will start trying to put the brakes on the U.S. and British military campaign. It's certainly also a factor in Britain. There could be a lot of political dissent in Britain on that level, especially as Tony Blair has made the humanitarian aspect of this military campaign very important. If there start to be reports of very high civilian casualties as time goes on this could be a problem. The Brits can take much more of the military casualties than perhaps our public opinion might suggest we can. That won't bother them as much as it will when we start to hear about thousands of Iraqi civilians being killed, especially as the battle for Baghdad approaches.

MR. LINDSAY: Let me exercise the moderator's prerogative in part because I have a piece on public opinion coming out on the Web today.

I think everything that Ken said is quite right, and Fiona's points are also well taken. But I think one has to keep in mind the bottom line or the big picture and that is assume for a second public opinion does sour either here or in Great Britain, what will it matter in terms of policy? I would suggest that President Bush's whole career suggests that he is willing to run very very strong public criticism of this policy to accomplish his end. He's a very firm believer that in for a penny, in for a pound. That one does not govern how you think about your military strategy on the basis of whether or not Charlie Gibson on Good Morning America is having a good day or a

bad day.

QUESTION: My name is Sayeed Arakat.

Mr. O'Hanlon, you mentioned the 4th Infantry Division. How do you expect that division to be deployed? Do you expect it to be deployed through Jordan? There's been talk that it may be deployed through Jordan.

Second, there seems to be some suggestion around town, McCaffrey after you were on [Forest Sawyer] last night came out and suggested maybe we ought to bomb the cities, we should not be held back by the likelihood of civilian casualties. Al Haig is saying the same thing. There were a lot of suggestions, there was an English commander that suggested the same thing. So are we likely to see that kind of thing?

The other point is, there's wisdom around town now that Saddam is likely to use weapons of mass destruction for whatever reason, and that once the cities are conquered if the Iraqis don't come out en masse to greet the Americans as liberators, how will that affect the outcome? Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: I'll take your first two points, and Ken, do you want to talk about chemicals? I'm not trying to give him the hard job again. [Laughter] I just know we agree, plus I like to defer to him on this issue, as all others, on Iraq.

But on the force, just sort of a factual question. My understanding is they're going through the Suez and the Red Sea en-route to the Persian Gulf. I think they're on the way. Somebody may know more in the room. But I think they're probably already en-route and that they're starting to make progress but they're still ten days away from being unloaded in Kuwait. That's my understanding. I'll let Ken or others correct me if I'm wrong.

On the issue of bombing urban targets, it's not a yes or no proposition. We're not going to start dropping 2,000 pound JDAMs in buildings where there might be some Republican Guard but that are being used primarily by Iraqi civilians for all the reasons Fiona and Ken and others have been emphasizing. We cannot turn this into another Dresden. It would be stupid. It would have been better not to fight the war. In my judgment at least. So we're not going to do that.

What we will do, however, is as we begin to have some ground forces approaching Baghdad we will start to use ground forces to find areas of Iraqi concentration and then use smaller munitions to the extent possible even at some risk of Iraqi civilian casualties, to try to take out let's say part of a building. If there are Iraqis who are largely in the basement of a certain building we'll try to use an Apache-launched Hellfire missile with a 40 or 50 kilogram warhead which actually may be able to destroy part of a building and not bring the whole thing down.

Sometimes we'll get it right, sometimes we won't.

But one broader point about McCaffrey's argument I think is correct, we have to do more. It's going to be messier and uglier than it has been so far because if you're going to defeat the Republican Guard, Special Republican Guard, in detail inside of Baghdad, they are going to be interspersed inside of civilian populations and we can't sort of find them one by one. That is too lethal to our own forces and we actually could get bogged down if we try to do that. So there's going to be some kind of a compromise on the issue of whether you bomb heavily in Baghdad or not.

MR. POLLACK: You've heard me say before the war ever broke out that my expectation was that Saddam would not use chemical warfare except in the defense of Baghdad. I continue to believe that's true.

The statement I made earlier though is that what I am wondering at least, and of course we're all just looking in from the outside and suspecting, is that the events of the past few days have probably affected Saddam's thinking on that issue further.

I don't know whether he does have a red line drawn around Baghdad the way that the military is suggesting, that if you cross this the VX goes off. That's a possibility. And certainly I wouldn't tell our troops don't bother, don't worry about that. My guess is it's actually probably a little bit more sophisticated than that. In particular, again, my sense of what's happened over the past few days has probably pushed his threshold for CW use a big higher. Again, my guess is that he reads the statements in the U.S. press as simply reinforcing his own conviction that the U.S. just can't take casualties, we're close to the breaking point. His statement I guess it was this morning indicated that his confidence seemed to be buoying. I think that's all being based on just the sense that we really can't take casualties, and maybe it was even lower, our threshold was even lower than he expected so he's just got to hold on a little bit longer.

I think it's very clear he understands that if he starts using chemicals he really risks undermining the best case solution for him which is that international public pressure is what causes us to call off the entire war. He's got to look past the war. In fact he seems to be looking past the war in terms of what is his situation when the United States does run up the truce flag and say all right, let's talk our way out of this. I think he recognizes having used weapons of mass destruction is the worst thing he could possibly do for that future situation. That it will galvanize public opinion around the United States, it will make it much harder for him to win, and afterwards it will make it much harder for him to have the sanctions lifted, along those lines.

It is very striking to me, again it's very much in accord with my expectations of what he was thinking, that he didn't do things like blow all these bridges. He is not waging a scorched earth policy because he clearly thinks that he's going to be in possession of Iraq when this is all

over. Again, it gets to this confidence issue.

Your second question about what happens if the Iraqis aren't cheering. First, my sense is still that at least the Shia in the south are very grateful to be liberated. We are still seeing images of Shia waving at the troops. They seem to be happy.

The biggest problem that we have right now is that we're not in the cities. The Saddam Fedayeen and the SSO are still in the cities. And another point that I made long before this war ever happened was my sense that the Iraqi people were desperate to be liberated by Saddam Hussein, but also very suspicious of our motives. And as a result, their reaction to us is likely to be a complicated one.

I think for the Bush Administration, and I will put it in perspective, I think they feel like they need one of two things to happen. Either they need to find large caches of weapons of mass destruction, or they need to have a joyous Iraqi population, one that's grateful to be liberated. I think it would be much better for them if they could have both, but I think their feeling is one or the other will justify the war. The problem for them would be if they don't find either.

I continue to believe that they're likely to get some degree of both.

QUESTION: George Condon, Copley News Service.

Two questions. First, several of you have talked about how things are going the way you expected in timetable. Is there anything that has surprised you or not gone as you expected, either diplomatically or militarily?

Second, is it inevitable that Turkish and Kurdish forces will fight in the north?

MR. GORDON: It's certainly not inevitable that Turkish and Kurdish forces clash in the north. It's more likely than it would have been had we managed to put in 60,000 of our own troops. Indeed I always thought one of the, we can get to something that surprised me. I thought in the end that Turkey would approve of our forces going through not because they supported the war which they clearly didn't, but because vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue itself it's actually in Turkey's interest or would have been in Turkey's interest to have a large American force there to be sure that there's not a rapid rush to seize assets like the oilfields around Kirkuk which the Kurds feel are theirs but the Arabs feel are theirs and there's a large Turkmen community which also feels it has a stake in this. If you don't have a powerful outside force to impose discipline and say no, we are holding these, and it will be the future Iraqi government that gets to own these resources, then you could have a free-for-all.

So in that sense it's more likely that Turks and Kurds will clash than it would have been

had we been there, and that's why I called this a failure of our diplomacy earlier.

It's not inevitable, though, and I don't even think it's inevitable that the Turks will go in. All of this debate about whether the Turks have gone in or will go in or incursion sort of blurs the lines a bit. It is more complicated than that.

Turkey has had a presence for years in Northern Iraq and moved troops in and out on a regular basis. If a small number of troops have gone in to patrol the border that's not the incursion that we're all afraid of. And I think the Turkish position is that they reserve the right to go in and do an incursion. They will have a large force on the border and are making it clear that if Kurds cross a certain line, in other words take Kirkuk and declare it as their capital, then in that case they will go in.

So both sides are poised very delicately playing this dance. The Kurds want to get as much as they can but not so much that they'll trigger the Turkish intervention, and the Turks don't want to go in but they're prepared to do so if necessary, all of which says that we are best advised to get that 4th Infantry Division and all the other forces we can into Northern Iraq before it becomes a free-for-all over resources.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Phil. I think Mike's going to tell us about his surprises.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to give you two contradictory answers.

On the one hand in broad terms I'm not surprised because I wrote an article before the war saying U.S. losses could be anywhere from 100 to 5,000. So I conceded I didn't have any idea what was going to happen in advance and therefore I'm not surprised. [Laughter]

On the other hand, a somewhat more serious answer, although both parts are serious even though they're contradictory. Yes, I'm surprised. Every single day you learn about military operations. Military technology is changing fast, geostrategic circumstances change fast, every major war we've been in in history, but certainly in the time I've been in this field you learn big things you didn't know before about the effectiveness of weapons, about the nature of likely resistance.

The Persian Gulf War. People at the Pentagon thought it would lead to several times as many, tens of times as many casualties as it did, and tactics like tank planking that I alluded to earlier, we hadn't even invented before the war began. Big surprises there.

Certainly we were all surprised I think in the Kosovo War. A lot of us thought the initial bombing would not go very well, it would be hard to stop Serb forces in the field, but the specific dynamics over how that war played out were still a surprise. And by the end I was

gratified that the war could even end with air power alone because I wasn't so sure anymore.

Afghanistan. A lot of people thought we could help overthrow the Taliban up north with the right American footprint but that in the south the Pashtun might rally around the Taliban and we'd have a hard time unless we did a full-fledged invasion.

So in every war the conventional wisdom tends to get turned a bit on its head. People have a hard time foreseeing what's going to happen. And every day I'm reading the papers for several hours a day, it feels like, because there's so much to digest.

So I think anybody who says we're not being surprised, including at CENTCOM, in the narrow sense, they can't be right. They obviously are being surprised every day because they're learning things they didn't know before. But still in broad terms the military was not expecting a cakewalk even if Richard Perle and Ken Adelman were and therefore in that sense the fact that there have been some setbacks is not a surprise.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you for your candor, Michael. [Laughter]

QUESTION: My name is Tamel Abarazi. I'm from [inaudible] Magazine.

I was wondering, 25 years of covering the United States I've never seen in my life so much operational deception. We look at the Arab press, a source of disinformation for 25 years. Now we see that they are really beating, scooping the American media. Second, that a lot of these so-called military analysts is like spokesmen of the Pentagon. They are not really analyzing anything new, and even they are giving wrong interpretation. And even the experts, which I respect, this panel here, but it's Brookings or American Enterprise Institute or you know, left or right wing, you know. Liberal or not.

What's happening? The American media is losing the coverage of the war? What's happening? We should sit in Washington and cover it through the Arab media? What's happening?

MR. LINDSAY: Is the American news media losing the war, Mike?

MR. O'HANLON: That's a big question and a big complaint. Let me just take one piece of it. Others may want to weigh in.

I think you're being a little too quick to say everyone's saying the same thing and jumping on the same bandwagon if that's your implication. Look at today's Washington Post. Ralph Peters wrote an OpEd scathing in the assessment of Mr. Rumsfeld's military strategy. A lot of us have expressed great concern about the potential for civilian casualties. And in fact a lot of us on this panel were pretty skeptical about the case for war and wanted to see if we couldn't find a way to

ensure Iraqi disarmament without war because of that real concern. We were taking on a lot of the cakewalk mentality throughout much of the last year.

At this point, however, I do believe that the war will be won, will be won rather quickly. I think we have a lot of history of modern militaries doing quite well against this kind of force in the recent 30 or 40 years of modern military history. I expect that Iraq's military has only a few tens of thousands of true hard core supporters. Persian Gulf history as well as the Iran-Iraq history suggests that's the right way to think of it. Iraq's military is not outstanding through much of its core. It's been deprived of resources for a dozen years. On the other hand they're fighting on their home territory so you are dealing with the potential for a nationalist reaction and even some guerrilla tactics. But I don't see this as being a Vietnam or Somalia-like situation because as much as some people will feel that we are invading their homeland, no one has great love for Saddam Hussein.

Therefore I like Rumsfeld's strategy of trying to make it clear we're not fighting the Iraqi people or even the bulk of the military if possible.

So I'm giving you a nuanced answer which I think has been my approach towards this analysis and that of many other people here. I don't believe we are trying to sell the Pentagon's bill of goods and we've been skeptical in many cases of the case for war for a year, but we are in the good position to win this thing. It's just going to have a cost. The cost is going to cause a potential strategic backlash, especially in terms of the possibility of civilian casualties, increasing the risk of terrorism out of anger against the United States for many fundamentalists, but I think in military terms there is not much doubt that we will win and win within about a month.

MR. GORDON: I also don't believe in the disinformation argument. The press here is incredibly transparent and there's such a diversity of views.

What I would agree with though is that the war is being covered very differently in different parts of the world. Just to take U.S. and Europe, let alone Al Jazeera that I've heard from friends in the Arab world about the way it's covered there. But I encourage you, flip back and forth between the American press and even BBC World at five minutes after the hour. BBC World will have interviews with wounded Iraqi civilians and their house was destroyed and it's going very badly and there are high casualties, and the Americans naturally enough perhaps, will be interviewing families of people taken hostage in Iraq and so on. It carries on that way for awhile. The French media, the German media, Turkish media. You have a much different take, and I think largely the analysts as well.

It reinforces, I always believed in this conflict that those who supported war would inevitably be putting a positive spin and those who were against it would be emphasizing -- It's

the natural human tendency or even more perhaps for a paid analyst. But that's happening. You get people on the media emphasizing different things. And that is, alas, only going to report -- We went into this war with a great divergence between American opinion and world opinion, and I think nothing we've seen so far suggests that that will converge. But on the contrary, via the media, it will only make this divergence worse as different sides are emphasizing very different things.

MS. HILL: But to your initial comment, there's been concern for a long time in the United States that the quality of reporting on foreign affairs has declined demonstrably in the United States media. This has been a major discussion. I have many British colleagues who moved to the United States and have been working for some time here in the U.S. media and have felt that there really has not been much attention paid to foreign affairs. This is not just related to the war.

We had a very good series here at Brookings during the war in Afghanistan on the role of the media, and I'd just encourage our communications people to bring that back again. We had some very good debates among former war correspondents and some of the luminaries of the U.S. media discussing how to report on this. And I think it is time for a discussion on how the U.S. media does look at the war vis-à-vis other media outlets.

I would say let's look at, as Phil said, another plug for the BBC on its reporting of the war which has been very good and very balanced.

But there's also a major difference among the various media outlets here. I was just switching channels the other night and was surprised at the difference in the reporting from the major channels on similar issues, and quite a critical note about the war was beginning to creep in here. So I don't think you can have a totally blanket approach to how the U.S. media is covering the war.

MR. POLLACK: I'll just make one comment to pick up on what Fiona said because I'd like to take it one step further which is that one of the things that really struck me about specifically the American media coverage of the war is the use of journalists with absolutely no background or experience in military affairs, which is just striking to me and I think is one of the reasons why you've had this completely uncalled for emotional roller coaster.

It's kind of odd for me that for American news services if you've got a medical story you generally send someone who is a doctor or has had medical training. If it's a legal story you get someone with a legal background. But when it comes to war, you send out people who last week were covering human interest stories. As a result I think a lot of times they get sucked up in the emotion.

I remember thinking the first couple of days that the exuberance that a lot of these reporters were feeling was completely misplaced and was sending absolutely the wrong message. My feeling about some of these guys charging through the desert with the 3rd Infantry Division was of course it's great. We're charging through empty desert. Wait until we actually get to something the Iraqis care about. Now you get, as a result of that initial exuberance when you suddenly do face resistance you get the pendulum swinging all the way back to the other side. My God, this is horrible. Yes, it's war. It is horrible. That's the whole point.

MR. LINDSAY: I'm going to exercise the moderator's prerogative yet again and simply make two points.

Number one, I wouldn't put a whole lot of stock on the media coverage you're getting anywhere, particularly television but also newsprint because you are only getting bits and pieces of the battlefield and what is happening. It's only going to be after the war is over that we can go back and get a fuller sense of what is happening. Right now you're getting lots of snippets that may not actually add up to a whole picture.

And I really want to emphasize the point that Phil made about sort of the priority people bring to these issues. I really think I would sum it up as it often matters less what people are looking at than what they're looking for. That is a reality that governs all of this. That's the reason why when the World Trade Center fell you could find people in Cairo, Egypt who applauded, and you find people in Cairo, Illinois who wept.

QUESTION: Phil Dine, St. Louis Post Dispatch.

The fact that this is a U.S.-led war and not an international initiative, is that now merely a matter of interest for historians, or will that come at some point during this conflict to play a major role? Or is it already in the sense of the firepower we're willing to use and the casualties we're willing to inflict and incur?

MR. LINDSAY: I think I'm going to give the question to Ken this time so he can then pass it off onto Michael.

MR. POLLACK: So what would be the easiest part of the question to answer? [Laughter]

I was always concerned about how we went into the war. I was concerned about the amount of diplomatic support that we had built for the war, the limits thereon. My concern was always not so much for the war itself because again, I think unilaterally the United States along with Great Britain does have the military power to win the war unilaterally, although I think your point about civilian casualties, it is being reinforced by that. I think there is a sense in the Bush

Administration that we do have to win the peace and part of wining the peace is making the victory itself look good, and therefore civilian casualties are a part of it. I think they probably are feeling a little bit more fragile in terms of international public support, maybe even American public support because of the impact of foreign audiences and because the American people did going into the war initially want a much bigger coalition.

But I would say this. For me the bigger issues are the issues that follow Iraq. My concern about the way that we went into this war and the diplomatic problems that we created and that others created -- It's not all the Administration's fault. There are a lot of countries that behaved extremely badly in the run-up to this war. But I think as a result of the diplomatic problems I'm really concerned about what follows -- both in terms of the reconstruction and our ability to gain wide international support for the reconstruction which is going to be long and very difficult.

But even beyond that, I keep talking about the crisis after Iraq. Which is to say Iraq is not going to be the last crisis that we as a nation or an international community face. It is not the last war that we are likely to fight. And in some senses the Iraq war was a very strange creature because bizarrely, it was perfectly suited to U.S. unilateral capabilities. If we had really wanted to, we could have gotten the Kuwaitis and the Qatarese and the Bahrainis, and that's pretty much all we needed to give us the diplomatic support we needed. We could have invaded by ourselves. We could have even let the British go. And we could probably rebuild the country by ourselves if we really want to. Obviously it's much more expensive to do so in every sense of the word but we could have.

The problem is that the next crisis we face may not lend itself so well to unilateral American capabilities, and what I'm worried about is the next crisis we face, that we're going to need our allies a lot more than we actually needed them this time, and next time around they're not going to be as enthusiastic. They're not going to be there for us the way we'd like them to be.

MS. HILL: I just want to emphasize that very last point that Ken has made. That's precisely what Tony Blair and the British are concerned about. But it's not so much an issue of only this war, it's what happens next. And in Britain everyone is very concerned clearly about North Korea. They're concerned about Iran. Obviously now there are discussions about Pakistan and the recent piece in the Washington Times with the admission that the Pakistanis have a nuclear weapon that can hit Israel or hit further afield. This was something that was also being discussed in London. I think that this is the real fear. It's that the U.S. has set the tone for preemptive action that will in fact precipitate future crises. That was a major part of Tony Blair's calculation in trying to embrace this particular conflict so that there might be a way of shaping the aftermath of the war in Iraq.

MR. GORDON: For me by far the most important variable about what comes next is not whether we have an international coalition but military success on the ground or not. I think that

variable far outweighs whether we had UN support or many countries going in.

That said, where it matters is, particularly to the degree that the war doesn't go well, winning support for the very difficult job afterwards. There I think we will pay a price for not having a coalition. Simply compare this one to Afghanistan or Kosovo before it. Where Kosovo, with NATO's buy-in you had the 19 government democracies committed to this; governments obliged to make the pitch even when their publics were hostile; and therefore when it came to peacekeeping and money afterwards they were on board and they were with you because you had legitimacy, you had alliance support. The same with Afghanistan. UN legitimacy, international support. You have a bond-pledging conference. You get lots of money from the EU and elsewhere.

That's not the case this time. It's obviously easier if it goes really well and people want to be involved, but to the degree that it's messy and there are a few terrorist incidents and it's very costly, it's going to be much much more difficult because this was perceived as a unilateral or bilateral or 45-lateral operation, then in the absence of that. That's when it's going to be hard when we go to the others and say we know you were against this, we did it alone, but can we have some money and peacekeepers?

QUESTION: Tom Mann, Brookings.

The last 24-36 hours lots of speculation about ongoing guerrilla war. Is a sort of indefinite guerrilla action even possible in Iraq? And is it plausible?

MR. O'HANLON: I'll start because I know less and then give it to Ken.

There are plenty of weapons in Iraq for a guerrilla war but I don't believe it's a plausible word for the following reasons. The Fedayeen forces are small. There's a small group of people who have benefited from Saddam's rule who have true loyalty to him because they are so heavily implicated in his rule that they will be retaliated against by any plausible Iraqi government. Even if we try to prevent that we could be trying them as war criminals ourselves based on the rhetoric we've used. That group is not going to be large so it's causing us some problems in the southeast. But the problems have been sort of three or four in number. Three or four specific things, and an ongoing difficulty with a couple of locations. But the basic strategy is not to go into the cities and not to fight in the places where they would be most powerful.

Now they can reconcentrate in Baghdad, but again their numbers are going to be in the 30,000, 40,000, 50,000 range. That's the number of people between the Special Security Organization, the Special Republican Guard, and the real core of the Fedayeen who we most have to worry about. That's not a big enough force for a guerrilla war in my judgment because a guerrilla war, what it really -- A guerrilla war is a war in which the population is providing cover

and support for the fighting forces and a potential recruiting base. So by those basic definitions this does not have the potential to be a guerrilla war in my judgment, but it does have the potential to be a messy urban fight nonetheless, with finite limitations on how long it goes and how bloody it is, but those expectations and those limits could still be moderately high. Still, it's not a guerrilla conflict in the making.

MR. POLLACK: I think we're very much on the same page, but let me answer it in a very different way to pick up on a lot of what you're saying.

Go back to Mao Tse-tung. The guerrillas are the fish, the people are the sea. I think most people believe that we're unlikely to face a protracted guerrilla war not just in the fighting for Baghdad but in the aftermath because there's unlikely to be a sea for the fish to swim in. You might have Fedayeen Saddam, SSO guys, who will decide let's take to the hills and keep fighting. But if the Iraqi people are against them they will be rounded up and caught pretty quickly. Marginalized very quickly. It will be very difficult for them to survive.

For me, I agree with Mike in the short term. I am somewhat concerned about the longer term and the possibility for a guerrilla war because for me the question is do the Iraqi people remain happy, contented, grateful for the U.S. presence. For me this is about post-war reconstruction. I think if the Iraqi people are happy with post-war reconstruction I think that sea will not exist. What I'm afraid of is that if we screw up post-war reconstruction and start moving in directions that really start to antagonize the Iraqi people, that you could see that sea start to form. Then it probably in fact won't be necessarily the Fedayeen Saddam who will be fighting us as insurgents, it will be the old Shia insurgents who are fighting Saddam in the south of Iraq. Those are the ones that I'm worried about. So for me again it's all about how the reconstruction goes.

QUESTION: Michael Bankfished, German Business Daily Hamelsplit.

Talking about reconstruction. You claim it's a major role for the United Nations whereas the U.S. Administration says it should be in charge of the oil for food program and the Administration itself wants to administer the political transformation process. Would that mean that a similar conflict is looming as was in the aftermath of 1441? And having said that, what does that mean for international relations? The imperial power argument versus the multi-polar world.

MR. GORDON: I think we can expect that conflict, indeed it's already begun. Very early on the British came forward and said we would like the UN to authorize that the U.S. and U.K. forces take charge in Iraq and start the humanitarian reconstruction process, and President Chirac of France said no way. I will veto that at the UN because it's not going to be up to the U.S. and the U.K., it should be up to the UN.

The fact is Chirac, just as he had leverage over the UN process on 1441 and afterwards, has leverage over the UN with a veto and over the EU. And he has made quite clear that EU aid will be contingent on his satisfaction that Iraq is being run by the international community and the United Nations and not by the United States. And you can see a real clash coming over this.

The United States, President Bush has staked so much on this politically that he's not going to be prepared to quickly and easily say okay, we won the war and let's see if the UN can make a go of success in reconstruction, and it's out of our hands so we'll leave it to them. But equally, Chirac can dig in and many Europeans will be with them for reasons Fiona explained about the feeling of Brits and other Europeans that says no, you want our money, you want billions of dollars for reconstruction from the EU, you've got to give something on the governance side.

So you can see a real clash coming over this and it's one in which I think the EU will be much more unified than it was over the issue of war and peace itself. I think there's a real chance that the EU will insist on a major role for the United Nations before they deliver their aid.

Last point, they've already made this clear. Chris Patten, the EU External Affairs Commissioner, said in advance that if this operation didn't have UN legitimacy and authority it would be much harder for the EU to come forward with reconstruction aid. He said this is not a warning, I'm not threatening you, I'm just describing it as a fact that when we go to our people and say we know you were against this war and again, that's why I said it depends so much on how it comes out. If it gets bloody and ugly then they would say well, we know you were against this war, it turned out to be really messy, there's still terrorism going on, the Americans have made a mess of it, but by the way I'd like to raise taxes so you can give them more money to govern Iraq. It's just very difficult.

So you can see over the coming weeks that follow the war a huge diplomatic struggle between the U.S. and the EU over this.

MR. POLLACK: For me it gets back to the previous point that I was making about the awful diplomacy on both sides.

For those of you who have been to any of these things you know I absolutely agree that I think the reconstruction has to be done under a UN rubric and I think that the Administration is still in the wrong place on it. But I also think that the French diplomacy is once again absolutely awful. I think the difference between Chirac's statement and Patten's statement is really important.

The Administration is in the wrong place but they are moving in the right direction. And

Chris Patten's statements are exactly the kind of statements that will keep moving them in the right direction. It is statements like we'd really like to help but if you won't do it under the UN you're making it impossible for us to do so. I think it's those kind of statements that are pushing the U.S., the Administration further and further in the right direction. It's why they talk about well yeah, maybe we are willing to accept some kind of a UN coordinator for all of the UN programs. That was a big step forward for this Administration. It's exactly the kind of thing that I looked at and said that's the kind of an admission or a willingness that could grow into a true SRSG position, which is what I'd like to see for the whole thing.

The French coming out and saying we will veto anything that doesn't put it under our, is what's going to drive this Administration right back to the wrong position.

So as I said, it is a combination of awful diplomacy on both sides that keep creating these problems for us.

QUESTION: I'm Petra [inaudible] with Czech Television. I think I have a follow-up.

I was wondering, the USA has started to award contracts, reconstruction contracts already mainly to the U.S. firms and it's being criticized particularly by the British. If you can comment on that.

MS. HILL: That's a real preoccupation also within Britain because it's seen as a sign of just what we've been saying of U.S. unwillingness to think beyond U.S. control of the initial stages of the reconstruction process.

Admittedly there is also, of course, some private sector concern here. You'll remember that Lord Browne, the head of the BP was one of the people who complained about British oil companies being excluded potentially from some of the refurbishment of the Iraqi oil sector. So there's also a degree of self-interest in a lot of these discussions.

But it goes back again to really trying to get the U.S. government to emphasize the international nature of any of the reconstruction, exactly what Phil and Ken have just said. That's very important for Great Britain because they need to avoid at all costs a semblance of a return to an imperial overlordship in Iraq. That would be the last thing particularly that Britain needs given its own rather troubled and difficult history in Iraq.

QUESTION: My name is Mark Shavan, NRC Hummelsblatt, the Netherlands.

Another think tank across town has been serving black coffee and a very strong vision over the past few Tuesdays for a project to remodel the world in a democratic fashion.

Do you think that is also the government's project? [Laughter]

MR. GORDON: I think the government is divided on the subject. I think clearly there are people in the government, probably now including the President, who subscribe to this vision. Who believe that this is going to be such a massive demonstration of American power and American success that it will have spillover effects throughout the region and lead to more democracy and America will be the shining light and the beacon that will inspire people including in the Arab world to buy into U.S. leadership and democracy. That is a vision, this is not a guess. Some of the people in the Administration have been writing this for more than a decade and are not shy about expressing their views on it.

It's not all of the Administration, though. I think you have another camp within the Administration who have supported the Iraq war for strategic reasons, for the issues of weapons of mass destruction and fear that Saddam would dominate the Gulf region if he had nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and they are doing this not because of the sort of ideology that we should spread American values and democracy around the world, but simply as a self protection measure.

Then there were other people in the Administration who didn't think the war was a good idea at all. You've had the interplay between these three camps all along. It was two against one in terms of whether you supported the war or not, even if for different reasons. But I think September 11th pushed the argument very much in the direction of those who wanted to remake the world. Because previously it was a finely balanced argument. Did it increase your security or did it diminish your security by risking a war in the Middle East. But with 9/11 it sent a reminder to people throughout the Administration and the country that the status quo was unacceptable for our security, and since it was too risky to maintain the status quo it led to terrorism and attacks on the United States, you had to run this risk and try to transform the world because the world as it existed at that time you couldn't live with any more. So that pushed the debate much further towards those who subscribe to the black coffee, morning AEI view of the world, and that I believe is a vision that the President of the United States has now adopted as his own.

MR. O'HANLON: I agree with almost all of that except for the last point. I think it's critical. Of course we're both speculating so maybe it's good to have this as an intellectual debate and we can watch for the evidence in the coming days. But I think Jim Lindsay may want to weigh in too.

But first of all, George Bush is a politician more than he is a global remaker. If you look at what he wanted to do with the presidency before he was elected, it was a very domestically oriented agenda. He was to the left of Al Gore on defense spending. He was happy to take the pro-defense vote because it was there for the taking and it was easy pickings for him. Granted everything did change after 9/11 in terms of protecting the American people from terrorism, but I

don't believe the democracy stuff motivates him the same way that the counter to terrorism does.

If you read Bob Woodward's book, Bush clearly thought right after 9/11 that Saddam was probably involved somehow. And I think he really wanted to view this as part of, this current war as part of the struggle against terrorist organizations of global reach. And I do not believe that this Administration or this President will ultimately start deciding to overthrow Syria which for example has a few chem/bio agents that they haven't really used as a threat against the United States. They support a couple of terrorist organizations but it's not really a threat to the United States. I don't believe that because again, George Bush is a politician more than he is a global visionary radical.

One last point, North Korea is a real problem we have to solve. It is a bigger crisis than the Iraq crisis. And he has to solve it. The only way he's going to do it is with a very concerted effort to focus on that issue. He may need to be as tough on North Korea as Bill Clinton. You get the threat of possible preemptive action against the Yongbyong nuclear facility back on the table in a little more explicit way as they tried to do in recent weeks. But I think in broader terms to get the South Koreans to go along, to get the region to go along, he needs a serious overall diplomatic strategy with inducements as well as threats and deterrence and he's got to focus a lot of energy on that or he is going to have presided over one of the worst deteriorations in security in Northeast Asia that could have imagined.

So I think he doesn't have the luxury of remaking the world in a democratic vision because he has to win reelection, he has to fix the economy, and he has to fix North Korea. That's more than enough.

MR. GORDON: A response to Mike just very briefly.

MR. LINDSAY: I want to respond to both of you. Go ahead.

MR. GORDON: It proves to the previous gentleman that all analysts don't think the same way.

I think that's right but not different from what I said in the sense that obviously George Bush is a politician and he has to work within the real constraints that exist and American public opinion and the constraints of the international system and crises like North Korea that might come and interrupt his vision. But that doesn't mean that he doesn't personally believe and is not convinced with this notion that the way to approach these problems is by subscribing to and putting forward this vision of American power that have a transformative effect. I think that's his vision. It doesn't mean he's going not invade Syria tomorrow. But it means that this is his view of how to approach the Arab-Israeli conflict, showing American power, getting people on the right side, standing for democracy, being less indebted to the Saudis and so on. So it's a vision that

obviously has to take place within a real world, just as the Iraq debate, it took him 18 months to get around to doing that.

But to say that there are real world constraints on this vision is not necessarily to say that it's not the vision of the President.

MR. LINDSAY: Let me add something. I actually agree with both of you but I think there's a real problem here in the sense of what we mean by certain terms, particularly the notion of talking about remaking the world. I think the President really believes he is going to remake the world. In fact I would say by going to war with Iraq we are remaking the world. We may not end up with the world we want to achieve, but we are in fact remaking it.

I think Phil is quite right, there is a division within the Administration between people I will call the democratic imperialists who want to use American power to spread democracy and remake the world in America's image. There are other people in the Administration I would label nationalists who believe that we use of American power to go out and whack bad guys.

I think it is unclear where the President falls in that spectrum. I think the President probably like most people wants to do both things, but he wants to do it at relatively low cost. I think that if you look at the President's speeches, what's remarkable is even when he gave his AEI speech where he sort of waxed philosophical about democracy, he never said how he was going to do it. It was an aspirational speech that pointed out a destination he would like to get to, made no commitment on the part of what the United States would do to achieve that world. I think the President quite likely in a lot of this is going to say that what he has done is centered on the road to democracy. And that going on the road to democracy does not mean what it might mean to most democrats or most people outside the United States. Aha, the President of the United States wants democracy. That means you're going to get USAID there, we're going to get Peace Corps there, we're going to get lots of development programs that are going to go in. That view of what is required to build a democracy is totally [opposite] the President's own philosophy about what you do at home to achieve goals.

The President talks about education and putting in education goals. He's not talking about the same litany of programs that Ted Kennedy would talk about. He's talking about something quite different.

So I think the President would say I'm doing both. There is no difference the way Mike and Phil and drawn it. But I will go one step further, and that is I don't think the Bush team -- whether we're talking about the democratic imperialists or the assertive nationalists -- view the world in terms of the threat posed by terrorists in the sense of non-governmental organizations. They are at a very different place than the Clinton Administration which loved to talk about globalization, trading these stateless actors that were taking power away from the state.

This Administration is dominated by hegeminists who believe that fundamentally world politics is about power and the exercise of power and the main actors in world politics are nation states. And if you flex your will, whoever has the biggest billiard ball on the table is going to get its way if it's willing to exercise its power. I would think quite honestly, this is what the Administration is demonstrating in Iraq. It is willing to go it alone. Then they would argue that the French can complain. They can't do very much about it. And I think that the reason we got from September 11th to the bombing of Baghdad was the fundamental belief that somehow Iraq must have had something to do with al Qaeda. There's no way this organization cooperated -- and Mike's quite right. The Bush At War book I bought, Woodward had several allusions to this.

So I think actually to go on from here they will be looking at other states to put pressure on. That doesn't mean they're going to go to war in Syria. I don't expect to see the 82nd Airborne parachuting into Damascus landing on the tomb of [Saladin]. However it would not at all surprise me if they march Damascus up against a wall and put a finger in its chest if this war goes well, and say that they expect, in much the way they expect things from the Turks, because this is an Administration that believes fundamentally that world politics is about power. We have more than anybody else and we're willing to throw it around.

I'll get off my soapbox now.

QUESTION: Walter Shapiro from USA Today.

At the very beginning or at least about an hour ago Mike O'Hanlon said few or no one in the military expected this to be a cakewalk even if some of that other think tank did.

What I'm curious about is what the panel thinks about did the civilian leadership of our government think that this war might be a cakewalk? I realize it's speculative, but I'm curious what you think.

MR. POLLACK: Obviously we don't know what anyone in this government thought just before the war, but clearly there were people in this government who had advocated policies toward Iraq which suggested that they thought that Saddam's regime could be toppled very easily. You had a large group of people in this Administration who had advocated things like using nothing but air power against Saddam, or arming the Iraqi opposition and sending them in under the cover of air power, or a tiny little force.

Mike said 70,000. They were arguing for 30,000 troops to go into Iraq. I think it's pretty clear that all of that would have been a terrible idea and I refer you to a piece that I wrote in 1998 saying that that would all be a terrible idea. But nevertheless, I think there is no question that there were some people in the Administration who at least at different points in time did believe

that Saddam was an easy target, the regime was brittle, there was no support for him, and all you really did was have to shove hard and the whole place would collapse like a house of cards. Pardon me for using the metaphor used by Hitler before the invasion of Russia, but I think that nevertheless it was going through a lot of people's minds at the time.

While both Mike and I say this is not at all out of the range of our expectations or the expectations I think of most of the people in the military, certainly anyone at CENTCOM and most other military experts, I think it is true that this totally was a bit of a surprise for a number of other people out there who really did believe that this regime would crumble very easily.

MR. LINDSAY: I'm going to give Fiona the last substantive word.

MS. HILL: Well, this all ties in again to the responses to the previous question about the over-estimation of American power. Unfortunately sitting here from the perspective of a Brit and thinking back over British history, the United States is in real danger of following the same path that Britain did in the 19th Century. These are the same discussions that were going on in London in certain circles before Britain suddenly found itself with an empire.

We seem to forget that Britain didn't in fact declare empire until the 1870s and 1880s. If you remember there were some very famous speeches about the consolidation of the British empire that were made by the Prime Minister Disraeli in the 1870s. I recommend you all go back and look at your history books. There are some very interesting parallels with where the U.S. is right now. An empire was of course collected and put together precisely on the basis of the fact that Britain felt it could go out there and have a lot of small wars and push a lot of very small peoples around and show its might and that people would crumble before it in terms of British might. The next thing --

MR. POLLACK: And with very small units.

MS. HILL: Yes, and with very small military units. And Britain also found itself bogged down in a number of wars which in fact led it then to exert its imperial power over places like Sudan. You may remember General Gordon in Khartoum. He didn't do too well. Then of course we had a glorious history in Iraq later where we decided that we had to in fact use firepower and ultimately mustard gas to exert ourselves. You may remember that it was Churchill, in fact, who had the discussion that it was more humane to gas the Kurds to show them just who was in power. We're in a very difficult situation right now, and I think perhaps if some people in the U.S. Administration had more of a sense of history they might be a little bit more cautious and perhaps pessimistic about some of the potential outcomes.

So as an historian, I'll leave that there.

MR. LINDSAY: Thank you, Fiona. Though I will point out that as Americans we probably don't own history books. [Laughter]

I would like to thank everybody for joining us today. I'd like to remind you that a transcript of this press briefing will be posted later today on the Brooking web site, www.brookings.edu.

We will have another press briefing this coming Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

I also recommend that you all check out our daily WebEds on the Brookings web site at www.brookings.edu.

Thank you for joining us.

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